

# SALTON SEA TEST BASE

SOUTHWEST DIVISION NAVAL FACILITIES ENGINEERING COMMAND



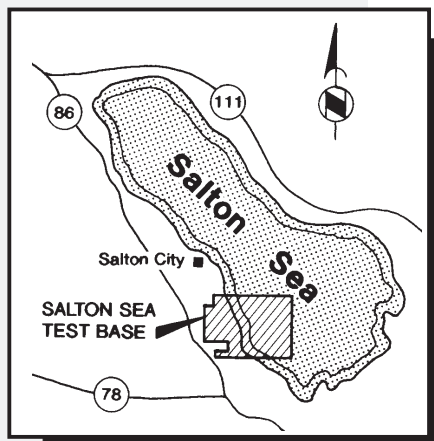
# FACT SHEET

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

## INTRODUCTION

This fact sheet is the ninth in a monthly series designed to provide timely information about the environmental cleanup underway at the Salton Sea Test Base (SSTB). Previous fact sheets explained investigative work conducted at many Installation Restoration Program sites at the base. This work included collecting samples of soil, groundwater, and sediments. Such samples were analyzed for the absence of, or presence and type of contaminants at these sites.

During the recent Removal Site Evaluation, risk screening was conducted to evaluate whether any constituents found to be present in soils or sediments are potentially hazardous to human health and/or the environment. The results are presented in the Removal Site Evaluation Report and its addendum. Both documents are available for public review at the information repositories listed on the back. This fact sheet provides an overview of risk screening, how it is conducted, and how the results are used.



## What is Risk Screening?

Risk screening is conducted as a means of identifying, or "screening" the risk of adverse effects on humans and/or the environment from contamination at a site. This information can help identify appropriate actions to take and is typically used to support one of the following recommendations:

- *No further action* - contaminants do **not** present unacceptable risk to human health and the environment
- *Cleanup required* - contaminants **do** present unacceptable risk and require cleanup
- *Further investigation required* - more information needed to make a decision

State and federal laws provide guidance for the risk screening process. The Navy has fulfilled these requirements at SSTB with the oversight of federal, state, and local agencies.

At SSTB, a "residential scenario" was used to calculate potential risk to human health at each site in question. Under this scenario, it is assumed that people live directly on the site and will eat, breathe, and be in direct contact with the identified contaminants 350 days a year for 30 years. This is considered to be highly conservative since SSTB is not being considered for residential development, and since it is doubtful that most people would stay in one place for that amount of time. For ecological risk, very conservative values were used to estimate effects of chemicals on the environment. Actual risks will be far less than those estimated.

## How Are the Results of Risk Screening Used?

Risk screening results help identify whether there is a potential threat, or risk, from exposure of identified contaminants to human, plant, and animal populations on and around the site. Once risks are identified, "risk management" decisions can be made.

Risk management is the decision-making process that occurs after risk screening has been completed. The decisions must limit the impact of chemicals considered to cause unacceptable risk to human health and/or the environment. Risk management decisions are not arbitrary. Many considerations, which at times are difficult to balance, are taken into account before any decisions are made. These considerations include community, technical, scientific, political, and regulatory input. Sometimes, the solution may be worse than the problem because some cleanup methods can actually pose more of an impact to human health or the environment than do the contaminants. For example, excavating soil from a site to remove contamination may destroy a sensitive habitat in the process. The basis for risk management decisions for SSTB are presented in the Removal Site Evaluation Report and its addendum.

## How is Risk Screening Conducted?

A systematic approach is taken to evaluate risk by identifying and evaluating the following:

- potentially exposed populations (workers at a site; neighbors of a site; surrounding environment, including plants and wildlife);
- potential exposure media (air, water, soil);
- exposure concentrations (how much contamination is there); and
- chemical intake (how much may potentially be breathed, eaten, absorbed by the exposed population)

Once these factors have been identified, known and suspected effects of chemicals on the human body, plants, and animals are used to mathematically estimate the risk from the site. The screening process uses conservative assumptions, and is intended to overestimate potential risks in order to be fully protective of human health and the environment, as mandated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

## RAB Update

The next SSTB Restoration Advisory Board meeting is scheduled for **19 February 1997**, at the West Shores Senior Citizens' Center, from 7:00 until 9:00 p.m. Presentations will include updates by the Navy's real estate specialist, and representatives from the Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services on the planned reuse of SSTB property. Any public member with an interest in this topic or any topics related to the environmental cleanup of the base is invited to attend.

**Information Repositories** for the SSTB cleanup project have been established at two locations in the area so that the local community has the opportunity to review project documents and reports:

### Salton City Library

2098 Frontage Road (Hwy 86)  
Salton City, CA (619) 394-4446

Hours: Mon-Wed-Fri  
8:00 AM - NOON  
1:00 PM - 2:00 PM

### Spencer Library Media Center

Imperial Valley College, Aten Road/Hwy 111  
Imperial, CA (619) 355-6377

Hours: Mon-Thur: 8:00 AM - 9:00 PM  
Fri: 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM  
Sat: 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM  
(except holidays)

*In addition, documents, reports, and Restoration Advisory Board meeting minutes and agendas are available at the reading room of the Salton City Spa and RV Park in Salton City. Please contact Ms. Shirley Lee Palmer at (619) 394-4333 for hours.*

## For More Information

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## MAILING LIST

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*Thank you!*

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### INSIDE:

Risk Screening at SSTB

